

June 22, 2009

Staci Ghneim  
Salt Lake Valley Regional Director  
Division of Child and Family Services  
645 East 4500 South  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84117

Dear Staci,

Over the past few months, the Salt Lake Valley Quality Improvement Committee has been reviewing data on the reasons clients 12 and older are entering care in the region. Our committee noted that for calendar year 2008, approximately 49% of the clients in this age group entered care with "delinquency" as the primary reason.

This data has raised some important questions for our committee. The major focus of DCFS is to provide services to clients and families of abuse and neglect and this is what the DCFS caseworkers are trained in. Two important questions it raised for us are: What is the effectiveness of DCFS providing services to youth with delinquency? How does being placed in foster care for delinquency affect the outcomes for these clients?

During the review of the data, our committee found that the judges agreed with the DCFS recommendations on assessments completed for the 5-day notices approximately 70% of the time. This was not the perception of many of the Salt Lake Valley caseworkers. The 5-day notice assessments made various recommendations including custody, in-home services and that the client remain at home. Our committee wonders if there might be other services or options that may better meet the "delinquent" clients' needs that could be offered in these assessments. Perhaps there are options that other agencies such as schools, juvenile probation or youth services are aware of that DCFS workers are not. We would like to suggest the region consider ways to enhance communication and partnering with the other agencies involved with the child. One possibility the committee thought may be beneficial would be holding a multi-agency staffing as part of the assessment to gather more information and make a stronger recommendation back to the courts, especially if the recommendation is not for DCFS custody.

The committee also believes that it may be beneficial for this information to be provided to the Court Improvement Team. The Court Improvement Team can review the data that has been provided by our committee and generate ideas to collaborate between SLV Region and the courts. These strategies could include presenting data to juvenile court judges and using them to explore possible other options for the delinquent clients that may better benefit the client and their family.

We appreciate your consideration of our request and ask that you report back to the committee on what decisions, if any, the region makes and the results. Thank you in advance on behalf of the members of the SLV-QI committee.

Sincerely,

Chris Chytraus  
Chair- SLV QIC Committee

Mike Hamblin  
Co-Chair-SLV QIC Committee

cc: Keri Burns, Carol Miller